

Merion, PA –Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) took time during his continuing efforts to speak with as many local residents as possible about his efforts on economic legislation in Washington to honor members of the special brotherhood and sisterhood that has put country before self to preserve our nation's ideals. The Congressman thanked Post Commander Sydney Fingerhood and members of Jewish War Veterans of America Post 305 for carrying on a tradition started more than two centuries ago that has seen millions of Jewish Americans make invaluable contributions, defending America's values.

{In his remarks, the Congressman mentioned South Carolina's Francis Salvador, elected to the General Assembly of South Carolina within a year of moving to the then-British colony in 1773, becoming the first Jew elected to an American colonial legislature. Salvador advocated for the Declaration of Independence as the only Jew to serve in a revolutionary colonial congress and became the first Jew to die for the cause of American liberty. The Congressman related the moving story published by the American Jewish Historical Society of Salvador's death "waging the American Revolution" against a Cherokee attack.

"Major Andrew Williamson, the militia commander, reported of Salvador that, 'When I came up to him after dislodging the enemy and speaking to him, he asked whether I had beaten the enemy. I told him "Yes." He said he was glad of it and shook me by the hand and bade me farewell, and said he would die in a few minutes.'"

"The contribution of Jewish Veterans to the United States is invaluable and the members have Post 305 have carried on the legacy of Francis Salvador valiantly and honorably," Congressman Sestak stated. "They exemplify the true meaning of courage, compassion, and patriotism and are an inspiration to us all."

The Congressman concluded his remarks with a commentary (a midrash) on the Torah to describe the wonderful characteristics that these Veterans exemplify. In the story, a businessman from the land of Israel traveling in a foreign country is found guilty of spying and sentenced to execution. He is allowed to return to Israel for 30 days by having a friend take his place in prison with the stipulation that the friend will be hanged if the man does not come back within the 30 day period. When a storm delays the man's return, it appears the friend will be hung; however, the man arrives moments before the hanging. He insists that he is to be

punished, not his friend, while the friend argues that it is too late, and to still hang him. The king, hearing the argument, asked to see them and, after listening to them both, allows them to go free under the condition that he can be their "third friend."

"The brotherhood and sisterhood of Veterans is very much similar to the bond between the friends in this story," said Congressman Sestak. I am proud to be part of this group and committed to preserving the legacy of the men and women who have served our nation and to ensuring that Veterans and current soldiers receive the respect and the support they deserve."

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the Congress.*

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